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Crosscurrents Spring 2010

Associated Students of the University of Puget Sound

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CROSSCURRENTS

————— SPRING 2010 —————

LITERARY & ARTS MAGAZINE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

From snoozing the alarm in the morning to turning off the lights at night, hands are the essential connection between individuals and the rest of the world. They allow you to interact with your surroundings, and for an artist, they are essential tools of expression. Whether they grasp a paintbrush, focus a camera lens, or type on a keyboard, hands allow the visible representation of intangible thought.

CROSSCURRENTS is crafted with the express purpose of sharing these representations. The imagery of hands runs through this edition, particularly hands in the act of slicing and dissecting. Take, for example, our guest contributor, Washington artist Nikki McClure, who brings intricate cutouts to life with an X-Acto knife. While we typically think of cutting as a way to remove unwanted excess, she carves paper into the designs she envisions; creating instead of destroying. Rather than representing removal, her work demonstrates that cutting can be an attempt to bring forward what lies hidden underneath.

Art is about exploration and experimentation, a search for what can best represent an abstract idea in the physical world. This edition of *CROSSCURRENTS* focuses on the means of crafting art as a conversation between hands and media. But most importantly, it challenges the definition of creation while emphasizing the personal connection between artist, art, and audience.

We invite you to become a part of the connection.

GRETA LINDQUIST
EDITOR IN CHIEF



NIKKI



TREASURE

NIKKI McCLURE = ARTIST STATEMENT

My artwork expresses hopeful activism. I aim to create a better world by common example and by celebrating the parts of our humanity that will carry us forward into the next 1000 years.

My work medium is paper. I cut each piece with an x-acto knife until it becomes lacelike with everything still connected. This process doesn't allow for correction of mistakes. Mistakes made are problems to be solved, new avenues to explore, lessons learned. Even though the work is careful and precise, there is freedom as I follow the whim of the blade. Positive and negative space are decided as I cut. The image emerges from the blackness and a story is shared.

INTERVIEW WITH

CCR: First of all, what is the appeal of the paper-cuts? Why have you chosen that as your primary medium?

NM: It kind of solved all the problems – it answered all of the criteria that I wanted my work to be. I wanted it to be black and white, I wanted it to be able to be small and big, easily manipulated in different scales but also in different media like copy machines and scanning, printmaking. I wanted it to be able to be mass-produced, having it be kind of populist.

Also, it's something that is still... well, with print-making, you never really see the things they were made with. You see the print, but the thing you carved and gouged, you never see that. The paper-cut solves that problem; there is an original and people can see that.

CCR: If you didn't need to sell your art, would you not sell it? What's the importance of getting it out there and sharing it?

NM: Getting your art out there and sharing it is different than selling is. Oftentimes, though, the getting it out there and sharing it requires you having your art for sale. Sometimes, art can turn in to more of a commodity than a piece of people's lives. The first piece I sold was a picture of me as a little girl picking green beans and I had a hard time selling it. But then I realized – the family that was buying it had a little girl and the picture would become a part of her visual memory of her home. She would look at it every day because it would be in her dining room and it would be a part of her creating and her psyche and it was like – wow, it was an honor and... once I realized that I was like “yeah, okay, I'll sell my work.” I realized that I can sell my work because it will influence people's lives and have its own life.

NIKKI McCLURE

CCR: Your website says your art has themes of motherhood, nature and activism. Do you feel that your art is a form of activism for you?

NM: Oh very much. It's... I can ride my bike, be organic, I can support the food bank, I can do these things, but I feel like through my art I can also do more.

I try to do it in a way so that I'm telling people "come on, get going! Things are messed up!" but I don't want to be so in-your-face about it that people shut it off. So I've been trying to call on this collective memory of the positive attributes of humanity that can help us get out of this mess that we're in.

CCR: You've taken a very creative path to become an artist. Do you have any advice for young artists?

NM: I never sat down and thought, "Okay, this is my career path." I didn't even have a website until three or four years ago. But what I would recommend is simple: show your work. You can't hide it. Through showing your work opportunities present themselves and things start moving after that. Go to the coffee shop or a nonprofit – put your art on cards. Don't wait for permission. I think that's the most important thing. Get your work out there enough that people start coming to you (laughing).

CCR: Is there anything else you would like to tell us, or tell the students at Puget Sound?

NM: Yeah, the other trick is: don't ask for permission and, if you can't think of anything to do, sweep the floor (laughs).

NIKKI McCLURE lives in Olympia. She makes a calendar every year as well as many books and pies. Sometimes she collaborates with her husband, Jay T. Scott, making lamps, and with her son making gardens and large holes in dirt.

www.nikkimcclure.com

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HANDS HUDSON HONGO

She's left a magazine open for me next to my toast and coffee. It says that they were wrong, that the oldest human skeleton wasn't, that they have found one older and everything is different. Finishing my mug I feel my hands shaking, even though the coffee is no colder than usual, and the toast isn't either, it's nearly warm.

When we met Julie couldn't cook any better than I could. There was a contempt we had for corporeal pleasures, not just eating but alcohol and smoking too. Even dancing and swimming; all those lower ecstasies. Our worst enemy was sleep, always threatening to keep us from each other, but most nights we'd win, giddy on ideas.

And after we finished school we felt a vindication, our peers tumbling elsewhere, lost and worn, while Julie and I were so close to something big, a new aesthetic that was ours. My grant bought a studio space

and before I left each morning she'd make me toast and a coffee, timed to both be hot, even though I knew the coffee took longer.

I haven't had anywhere to go early in awhile. Now it's Julie who must get up, shower and put on that outfit that used to be funny but hasn't been lately. And we don't talk so much now, but exchange notes and papers. I dreamt that today I'd find one signed "Management," but there's no evidence of any human hand; the article doesn't even name a reporter.

It says that humans didn't rise from four limbs onto two to conserve energy like they'd thought, the hypothesis that said we needed more oxygen for our brains, but that we needed free hands to bring goods to mates. A scientist calls this "monogamy" under a bold line that says "Food for Sex," and I'm rinsing my cup where Julie must have stood, after making coffee, before toasting bread.



CRÊPE



UNTITLED

14 MONICA HANSON

AT SEA

BECCA ROSENBERG

she wants yesterday
his words almost of caramel
a delicious liquid thing

moist glass voices
warm belly growls
sex on down like clouds

to wake alone is porcelain
her hands like tiny boats
in a bathtub ocean

DAMIAN

HANNAH CALKINS

I think I'm probably the only person who doesn't remember the moment they met him. All I know is that I didn't know him, and then I did. And then there we were.

My apartment is buried underneath a decaying Victorian mansion and it's always a little cold down here, but in all of my memories of Damian it's absolutely freezing, dead winter, never enough heat and never enough clothes on. I tell anyone who wonders that he crashed here after a party and stayed two years, but I don't know who I would've invited to a party before I knew him.

Damian brought a revolving cast of people with him when he came, all of them skinny and mascara-smearing, all of them made of elbows and collarbones and long thighs that didn't touch. They would come tramping up and down the perpetually icy stairs with beer and drugs, tracking in snow as they came and leaving melted puddles behind on the concrete floor as they went. They came to shout at each other and scream and try on Damian's clothes. They came to sprawl their skinny limbs on the concrete floor and fling themselves across the garage sale paisley sofa that served as Damian's bed, though I never saw him sleep.

They came to listen, bloodshot eyes glowing with love and chemicals, as

Damian climbed on top of one of our teetering barstools to sing songs and spew prophecies and tell stories outrageous as the outfits he wore – combat boots and creamy negligees, stilettos and bowties. That awful mink coat. He jumped and danced and contorted himself into shapes with the nubility of a twelve-year-old girl, but there was something world-weary and aged in his graceful movements. In the deep set of his eyes.

Of course, Damian was just a drunk, a maniac, crazy as hell. I'm sure he's dead by now. No one like him could possibly live for very long. He's been gone from my life for twice as long as he was a part of it, and I know I'll never see him again.

Honestly? It's kind of a relief.

I'm just as surprised to see any of his old crowd still alive, but once in a while one of them will stop to tell me that they think they saw him, wasting away from drugs and disease on the street somewhere.

"I'm sure it was him," they say, pressured, eyes restless, like they're reporting a crime they know too much about. "I'm pretty sure."

We shake our heads and look at our feet and remember him as a tragic hero in lingerie.

I'm sorry, I imagine saying to them instead. I'm afraid I don't know who you are.

*

"People can't get enough of you," I said to him once.

This was early on, when I didn't understand what it was about Damian that made all those people turn into shrieking animals. I'd seen girls try to rip off his clothes – when he wore them – and boys cry at his feet. They clawed at each other just to get close to him. People always wanted to gaze at him, touch him, be him. He was beautiful but boyish, dark-skinned but blue-eyed. He looked like everybody, but no one looked like him.

We were getting ready for another party, sitting on the barstools in our dingy little kitchen with the exposed lightbulb and testing my new martini recipe. The counter was strewn with open bottles, and pieces of the glass I'd just broken and made a calculated decision not to clean up right away. Damian wasn't wearing anything but an apron and false eyelashes, but I took him very seriously as he looked up at me from beneath the thick plastic fringe.

"It's me that can't get enough of them," he said. He lifted his face to the ceiling, shut his eyes like butterfly wings, and breathed out the most perfectly round smoke ring I've ever seen.

*

The apron and the eyelashes only came out for special occasions, like party nights, which were every night. During the day he'd swan around the apartment in a musty mink coat that was meant to reach the ankles of a 1950s society lady but hit him at the naked bony knees.

But one night he wore it because we expected no company; a snowstorm was brewing and we were snowed in – or, really, everybody else was snowed out. He was wearing the fur coat over his underwear, chain-smoking and gesturing wildly with an empty martini glass while he told me another pressured, manic story. Our breath was hanging in front of us; snow and wind blew in through the crack underneath the heavy door. I don't remember what he was talking about, but he stopped abruptly, tossed the martini glass into my open hands, flung the coat to the floor.

It was like an animal had died at my feet.

“I’m going out,” Damian announced.

“Out?” I murmured after him, and gathered it up in my arms. “Damian, the snow.”

He dismissed me with a smirk and wrenched the door open. Every breath, every warm cloud of smoke we’d exhaled inside was sucked out into the frosty air. I gathered up the coat in my arms. It made my skin itch.

The door slammed behind him and I heard his heavy boots race up the treacherous stairs two at a time.

I remember scraping one of our barstools across the concrete floor and putting it underneath the dingy rectangle window so I could look up the stairwell at him. He was standing at the top of the stairs, hopping from foot to foot, arms above his head. His laugh — sharp, wild — cut through the wind. I could count each of his ribs by the weak yellow light coming from the lamp above our door, and he looked shadowy and sinister; an angel, a demon. He seemed to be dissolving the cold air around him, flecks of white vanishing on his skin. He stopped laughing, stopped jumping around, lowered his arms. He turned, and I sucked in my breath, afraid he’d see me looking up at him. But he didn’t look down the stairwell, just back and then away, his eyes the same blue as the snowy twilight air. I thought I saw him shiver.

My teeth chattered, and I remembered his coat like dead weight over my arm. Slowly, so as not to lose my balance, I draped it over my shoulders. Its arms hung limp at my sides.

It was twice as heavy as I expected, and not as warm.

*

“My mother was a sixteen-year-old whore,” he shouted from the same swaying barstool in the corner of the living room, surrounded by patchwork people who brayed and clawed at him. His eyes were wild, his deranged grin nicotine yellow in the hazy light. “And my father, well – he could be anyone.”

I had severe doubts about his origins, but I never questioned him. He had this way of turning every lie into reality, as if each word was happening in front of you as it rolled out of his violently red mouth.

I don’t know what exactly he was on that night but he seemed particularly haggard and delirious. Between him hollering about his teenage prostitute mother and the crowd’s noise and the screeching thumping music that was on, the volume was incredible. Every sound I made – every cap unscrewed, every cork popped – was happening in a vacuum. That’s how it always was when Damian was on.

“Wait, wait,” he interrupted himself, slicing his story short. He halted every sound and movement and held them all still. He shouted out for a cigarette, for a light. A hundred hands fumbled and raced to be the first. He bent down, lipstick red lips pursed, and a flame flickered in front of his face.

“*Merci beaucoup*,” he said as he stood and smoked with great flourish. The stool teetered precariously underneath his combat boots but he stood solidly. “Where were we? Oh, yes. My dear, dear daddy. Whoever he was,” Damian said, pointing at them with the ember of his cigarette, implicating them all as they showed him their teeth and clapped and cheered, “he must have looked good, because my mother was *ugly* as sin.”

He made a twisted, horrible face that split in two with his grin and let out a startling bark, bent himself in half, threw out his arms. The mess of people below jumped and screamed and clawed at each other. Damian straightened and his wildly curly hair brushed the ceiling. He gently set his

fist on his hip with a right-angle elbow, and twitched his mouth at me from over their heads.

I raised a glass full of someone else's drink to him.

"Yes, she was all of sixteen years old! And a whore," he said, drawing out the one syllable into several. "Oh, shocked, are you? Really? It must be about the ugly."

The crowd shrieked and howled. They were.

"Yes, it must be. Because look at me," he said to them, as if he needed to tell them to, as if they weren't already captivated. He started writhing around, elegantly, obscenely, gyrating his sharp slim hips and waving his arms around his head. "I may have my father's good looks, but I am just as eager to sell myself to you as she was to him. It is in my *blood*." He spat the last word like he was really spitting it out, like he really was spitting blood.

Damian recoiled into a scary grin. "You people don't pay so well," he said, and took a long drag. The smoke hung over the heads and rolled over the ceiling.

It was hard to deny. He was really just a big whore for them all, towering over them, nearly naked and living off their love for him.

They screamed and clapped. I imagined them going into seizures, fainting beneath him. Damian looking mad and sinister and smiling at me from over their collapsed bodies.

I shoveled some ice cubes into someone's gin and tonic with surprising force, but I couldn't hear them clink against the glass.

*

More and more, they – the usual revolving cast of people, his crowd – would come tramping down the icy stairs and Damian wouldn't want to see them. They would be disappointed to see me at the door, shaking my head and offering no explanation because I had none. On those days he'd only be half-costumed and half-naked – normally he was fully one or the other – and ominously quiet. Whatever he told me on those days seemed even more true.

The day before he disappeared was like that, and colder than ever even though the sun was shining in one bright rectangular ray through the tiny basement window. We were sitting cross-legged and facing each other, smoke and breath hanging between us.

“Your name isn't really Damian, is it?” I said to him. It was more of a statement than a question; I was feeling bold.

“Of course it isn't,” he said. He was wrapped up in his mink coat but still shivering beneath it. I couldn't tell if it was because of the cold or because of something else, and I was too scared to ask. He looked like he was in pretty bad shape, gaunter than I'd ever seen him. The shadows under his cheekbones matched the ones underneath his eyes.

He ground his cigarette into the arm of the ancient couch with shaking fingers and asked me if my name was really mine, though it was clear he knew the answer.

I just sighed. My own cigarette died at the filter.

Damian wasn't looking at me anymore, but staring down at the water-stained rug. I hesitated, then remembered that whenever he wasn't talking it meant that he was listening.

“You know, sometimes I feel invisible,” I said.

He smiled at the floor, a smile smile that gave nothing away, not even teeth. “Being invisible has its advantages,” he said.

I wanted to ask him what the hell did he know about being invisible, what the hell was he talking about? He was the one who made everyone else disappear. He was the one people wanted to die dissolving into.

But then he let out a death rattle of a cough and leaned his head back, neck arched, throat exposed. He closed his eyes and wrapped his coat around his bony body. I was scared of him then, scared for him. I guess he’d always been invisible, right out in the open.

But now he was pale, scrawny, shrinking into his coat. And all that thick heavy fur finally just grew right over his skin, right before my eyes.

*

The next morning I walked softly through the apartment opening doors, looking around quiet corners. I didn’t call out his name, and I never expected to find a thing.

He was gone, and I know I’m never going to see him again.

Every so often I’m convinced I never really did, that I was the crazy one, that I dreamed him in and out of my life, but now I can’t get away from other people who hallucinated him, too.

“I saw Damian,” they say to me in low voices. Even now people speak his name in whispers. “I thought you should know. I saw him in the park.”

No, I think. Damian is gone.

“It wasn’t good, man. Totally tweaked out, probably turning tricks again. I guess he finally started buying his own drugs.”

We’re never going to see him again, I want to say.

“He pretended not to see me. But it had to be him. I’m sure it was. I’m pretty sure.”

I’m sorry. I’m afraid I don’t know who you are.

And maybe it was him, maybe it really is him that they see, hollow-eyed and haunted in parks and under bridges. But as far as I’m concerned what I called *Damian* because that’s what he called himself existed for about two years, maybe more. There was no before, there isn’t an after, there is no now. He lived in my space and breathed my air for exactly that long. And then he didn’t. And then he just wasn’t.

The problem, though, is that what I call myself existed for about that long, too. What I call *myself* came in with him in the snow and the light and the cloud of smoke, and vanished with him underneath a blanket of fur.

And he will not be back, I will not be back. Because he is gone and I will never see him again. Even though I see him everywhere, even though I see him in every pretty young thing and every bum, every junkie, every picture of every movie star. *Damian is gone and I will never see him again* even though I stare down my own reflection trying to find him, looking for him in my wide blank eyes, in my stretched-out smile, over my shoulder.

But it’s not him. He’s never there. And I guess he never really was.



I checked
its innards—
wrong tiger.

Travis Hancock

PICTURE | POEM. 16

pen and ink with watercolor

TRAVIS HANCOCK 15 |

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

DAVID TVEITE

FOR G.C.

I am a bona-fide, certified,
superconducting electromagnetic messiah,
as seen on TV,
custom-made and hardwired for your every need.
I'm fleet-footed and heavy-handed,
hardheaded but easy on the eyes.
A doomsayer and a power player,
overzealous and underappreciated,
underpaid and overplayed,
overwrought and underrated,
undernourished and hyperextended.
I'm self-taught, self-motivated,
self-conscious and self-destructive.
I'm hot-blooded and I'm mild-mannered,
limited edition with infinite potential.
Fat-free, gluten-free, duty-free and dolphin-safe.
Confidential, non-judgmental, home-delivered and open 24 hours.

I'm a solar-powered lunatic,
a carpet-bagging basket case,
an egomaniac and an eco-terrorist.
I'm a closed-circuit psychopath
with a one-track mind.
I've got high-tech solutions
and high-class delusions,
I see the glass as half-full
but I'm three-quarters blind.
I've been retooled, re-imagined, reinvented,
reinforced, retrofitted and FDA approved.
I'm a top dog, a cool cat,
a cash cow, a dingbat,
a culture vulture and a hungry hungry hippo.
I'm a high-stepping holy roller,
an icebreaker and a power broker.
I'm a smooth-talking street preacher
with bad ideas and good intentions.
I'm an earth-bound space heater,
an outsider and an innovator,
a flag-burning bed-wetter,
a maverick and a trendsetter.
I'm shit chic and I'm fart deco.
I've got an ulterior motive
and an alternative lifestyle,
forward thinking and backwards compatible.
I'm on the air and off the wall,
a ne'er-do-well, a know-it-all,

and I don't like to toot my own horn
but I march to the beat of my own drum.
I'm a quick and easy operation,
a stainless, painless no-brainer,
environmentally friendly and tax deductible.
I like life-changing experiences
and mind-altering drugs.
I'm a single-minded double-talker,
fully loaded and semi-automatic,
fuel-efficient and ergonomically designed.
I'm a go-getter and a showstopper,
a firebrand and a waterhead.
I fight the power, I support the troops,
I give peace a chance and I stand up for the little guy.
I'm above the law, beyond the pale,
on the fence, off the reservation
and in theaters near you.
I'm a laugh riot and a drama queen,
a freedom-loving hate machine,
as crooked as a laser beam,
the best, the worst, no in-between,
the greatest show you've ever seen,
I'll blow your mind, rip out your spleen,
you heard what I said, do you know what I mean?

I'm a 21st-century American dream.



BOYS NEED SLEEP

PAIGE REITZ 19 |

BROTHER

TRISTEN HALL

In my June dreams you sat in a sandbox,
swarms of bright orange
caterpillars crawled over your
baby skin, fell into your denim
overall pockets, poked into your blue
blue eyes. And I couldn't save you.

In others, you and she chased me.
We flew over suburban roofs,
the duck pond and park, over our neighbor's cornfield,
her twig fingers poked at my naked feet.
And you, my brother,
stared up at me from the hot July sidewalk,
your eyes reflecting the sky's neon tornados.

So, in France I played Freud,
waking from another dream, where
you ran after me, you,
a small demon, white skin flopping,
powdery and soft as an old woman's face.
You stared at me, your January blue irises bobbing
like egg yolks in water,
your hand reaching for mine.



GIRL WITH CHICKEN

LEMON SEASON

OLIVIA MARGOSHES

There will be a lemon tree in the far corner of the garden
she does not have. In the spring, when the blossoms give way
to fist-sized yellow fruit and the branches begin to sag,
she will pluck them one by one, holding their rounded diamond weight
in her palm, and slowly, as if learning the language of their skin,
she will raise them to her nose and inhale.

The garden she does not have will yield custards and meringues
in the summer. Preserves will cool in jars on the porch. Their lids will pop,
and soon she will not be able to distinguish the sealing jars of lemon
from the songs of the towhees.

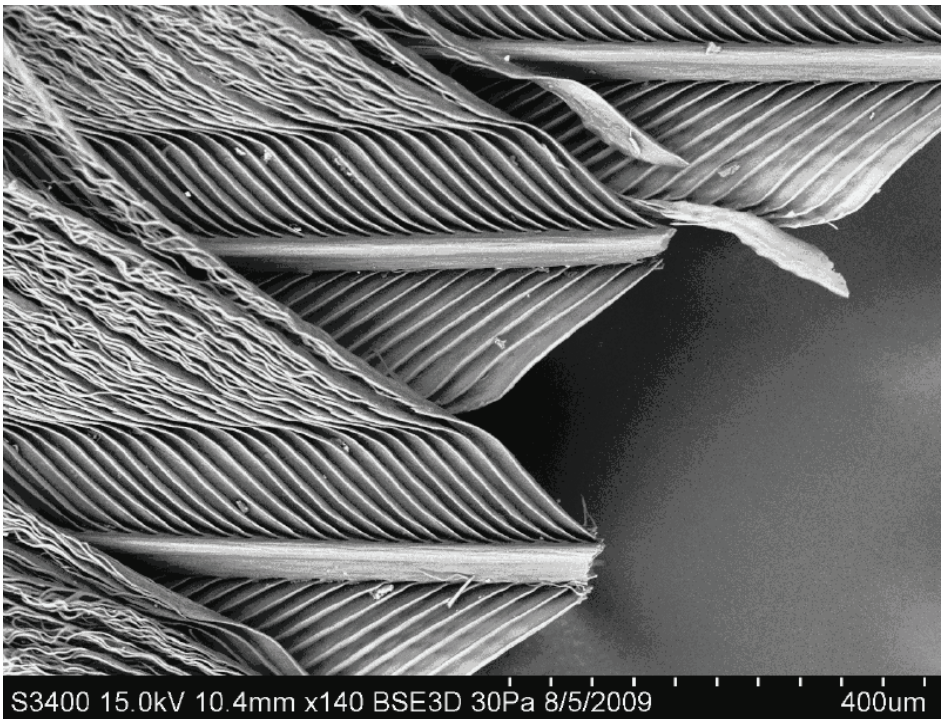
Come autumn, the grass will stiffen in morning chill, and by winter
the garden she does not have will glow with a ghostly pallor.
Inside, she will pull a glass jar of preserves from the top shelf
of her pantry and listen for the pop as she pries up the metal lid
with the blunt edge of a butter knife.

But it is December and never the right season.
Her cupboards are filled with canned beans and dried lentils
but nothing labeled in her own tilted script.
She grabs a potato from the bag on the floor, resigned
to a life of starchy store-bought tubers, while outside
the window there is a thin membrane of snow on the crumbling
pavement where her lemon tree should be.

COMMON TERN – SEM IMAGE OF FEATHER BARBULES

*Dedicated to Stewart Lowther
Courtesy of Slater Museum of Natural History*

TYLER WEAVER



SELECT

WORKS

AND REVIEWS

SURGEON GREEN

KAREN BARBEE

I was absent for the delicate sawing,
 excision of the man's leg
just below the knee. But after —
they placed the gangrenous lower limb in a
 black plastic bag. It was left,
 standing alone
on a stainless steel cart, amongst
sterile surgical instruments —
soon to be wheeled to pathology,
 dissected,
 examined,
 and incinerated
with the rest of the problematic
 appendages,
 organs,
 and unnecessary parts, discarded.
Meanwhile, the surgeon neatly folded
 the excess skin like a package
 around bone and muscle leading
to nothing.

POETRY SELECTION

In her poignant poem about moving through loss (“In Blackwater Woods”), Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Mary Oliver writes: “Every year/everything/I have ever learned/in my lifetime/leads back to this: the fires/and the black river of loss/whose other side/is salvation . . . / you must be able . . . /to love what is mortal;/to hold it/against your bones knowing/your own life depends on it;/ and, when the time comes to let it go,/to let it go.”

With surgically precise syntax, Karen Barbee’s poem leads us through the literal loss of a leg below the knee. This poem reverberates in the present moment with the multiple amputations and losses in Haiti’s recent and devastating earthquake. While the poem does not spare us the “nothingness” of the missing lower limb, It reminds us that even with grievous loss, our hope is that the rest of life may be saved. A certain gratitude exists implicitly toward the physician’s skill and the modern facility, one that Karen actually shadowed in real life, seeing the aftermath of this graphic surgical procedure, one that is universally feared. But even in the face of this raw calamity for the patient, the “Surgeon Green” has been able to spare those vital organs necessary for survival. The other side is salvation if we can make it across that dark river of pain and grief to eventual healing

BEVERLY CONNER teaches creative writing in the Department of English. She is currently at work on her second novel (*Falling from Grace*) about a literal fall that results in traumatic brain injury. The novel explores the many ways we fall and, more importantly, the ways we get back up.

YELLOW ART SELECTION

“If you’re happy and you know it,” you’ll know what to do. *YELLOW* tempts such applause.

Sealed in a rainbow candy shell, the fetus shifts as though preparing for ritual games and nursery rhyme hand claps. This illustrious fantasy masquerades as play like cracking through jaw-breaker layers, while reality and form hide within shells and skin. A militant skeleton commands, “Simon Says,” while turning her back to conceal a fertile side.

The mushroom ground foreshadows a life cycle made of sugar and spice and all that is nice or snails and shells and puppy-dog tails. It’s scientific and psychedelic, merging Plato’s Allegory of Love and Leonardo da Vinci’s anatomical renderings with the tarot card “Seven of Cups,” which appears signaling choice and temptation.

Yet, the internal sublime is protected by tradition and myth. Children dye eggs and the Easter Bunny hides them. The pot of gold under the rainbow is the magic and fortune of yellow yolk, necessary to nourish a fetus or otherwise extract, to make egg tempera pigment.

Painting a canvas yellow with yolk might also foretell which came first: reading into Amber Catford-Robinson’s acrylic and acrylic transfer painting, *YELLOW*, I see an egg.

Yellow but tempted, the cowardly chicken was afraid to cross the road. To get to the other side of this skeleton we must play our card and venture into the unknown. As in Plato’s myth of original wholeness, this is the place where man is no longer joined back-to-back with his partner, thus failing to see the other’s perspective and tumbling over themselves like a fetus enwomb. This is the path of enlightenment from conception to calcium, from yolk to bone.

KEEARA RHOADES, visual and digital artist, merges technology with sculptural form to activate her multi-media installations. Working predominately in video and sound, her works have been exhibited nationally and internationally over the past decade. She received her MFA from the University of Washington, and currently holds positions as an Adjunct Professor at Puget Sound, UW and the Photographic Center Northwest.



acrylic and acrylic transfer
18"x24"

AMBER CATFORD-ROBINSON 29 |

THE IDEA

JAMES GAINES

When I was a much younger man, I lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This would have been right before the Great War. 1912, I think. I had been born in 1892, and I was twenty when I decided that trying to be a sailor had been a bad idea.

I could tell you about the harbor, or the factory, or the changes that came with the war, or even how I started working at the newspaper after the explosion, but I'm not going to. I'm going to tell you about the market. Out of everything, that's still what I remember best.

At the time, I lived in an apartment on Convoy Place. My living quarters weren't anything special, a rented room above a watchmaker's shop. It was all I could afford on a factory man's wages. It was dim, small, and fairly ugly. One of many things I was dissatisfied with in my life. I honestly don't think I could stand to live there again. But if it had one redeeming property, that was its location. They say that real estate is all about the location and, in this case, they were correct.

Less than two blocks down towards the harbor was the Convoy Place Market, a wonderful huge cacophonous jumble of merchants. I used to actually keep my windows open as much as possible, so I could always hear the din that came trundling up the street. And whenever I had to go to work I would pass by the market on my way down. Actually, I used to set my alarm clock half an hour early, just so I'd have time to run in

SELLERS

PROSE SELECTION

and look around.

Most of the merchants would still be setting up as I walked through (I had the early shift at the factory). I'd watch as the fishermen laid out the morning's catch on fresh ice or straw and the greengrocers would stack vegetables into great pyramids. There was a magician who used to set up a show in one corner, I used to go over and talk to him for a bit while he practiced. We were friends, of a sort, sharing our work woes or swapping stories.

But there was always one stall that was just head and shoulders above all the others. The hands-down no-contest best. And that was the shop where they sold ideas.

It was set up in an alleyway, a long skinny shop that ran back between two tall buildings. Out in the front there were about eight huge brown glass bottles. Each one was easily the size of a ten year old child and must have weighed at least sixty pounds. Nets hung from the ceiling, packed with smaller wine bottles and casks. And in the center of all this glass and rope was the merchant himself, the idea seller. Or, rather, I should say one of the idea sellers. The person changed from day to day. There must have been twenty of those men, rotating shifts as the days progressed. They were always very old; the youngest I ever saw was still well over fifty. And they all dressed the exact same way: very dapper brown coats,

bowlers, and very thick smoked glasses.

But other than the age and attire, they were all very different physically. They would change from short to tall, fat to rake-thin, deathly pale to the deepest darkest black that you would ever think a man could be and farther than that. But always, always, little brown coat, small discrete hat, and thick dark glasses.

They'd shout out their catch-calls and lures, trying to drown out the din of the market. "Good ones today!" or "Fresh off the fields!" When I was back in my room, if I stuck my head out the window and concentrated, I could pick them out of the clamor. "None but the best! Inspiration incarnate!"

At the end of my day, coming back from the munitions factory, I would stop by the market again. I hated my job. It was dull, dirty work, and watching weapons roll off the line made some deep part of me vaguely uncomfortable. Like a cold sore of the soul. At least I didn't have to handle the finished products, I think that would have been worse. I was a machinist, tending the machines day after day. I tried to find other employment many times, but I always ended up right back in that building.

Anyways, I used to stop by the market after work. I'd pick up any food or supplies that I was missing. Maybe grab a newspaper from one of the boys who used to run around. I devoured those papers, obsessed with reading the newest developments. My addiction only got worse once the war started. I almost got fired once for reading the paper at work. I was so engrossed with an article about weapon development that I forgot to actually do the munitions work.

So I'd grab my paper and my food and, if I was lucky, I'd stop by the idea seller and look around. If I had a little bit of money left over at the

end of the day I'd go ahead and buy an idea. I'd hand the merchant my change and the old man would open up one of the glowing bottles and reach inside. He'd pluck an idea out of the glass and wrap it up in yellow paper for me.

Mostly I saved them for later, some doldrum part of the night or the next day's work, but occasionally I'd take them out right then and there.

They were so beautiful.

They were iridescent and gossamer and fine. Almost invisible. If you looked at them straight on they stood out plain as day, but if you turned away you couldn't see the idea at all. All you'd have in your hand would be a slight warmth and a pinch from where they held on. In form they looked almost like caddisflies. Body transparent, wings and eyes made of something akin to gold or candy floss. As soon as you saw it you knew it was special. Something totally different from anything else. Pure and bright and untarnished.

They looked like how the souls of children must look.

And then you'd eat it.

I only ever bought the ideas from the big bottles. Those were the cheapest. The candy on the way to work. Pleasant, but nothing amazing. They were enjoyable in and of themselves, but I always hoped that they would bring something life-changing, something I could use to escape or mollify the worries that life placed in my mind. But they never did. Like I said, they were just candy.

But those weren't the only ones the merchants sold. If you went farther inside the shop you'd see rows and rows and rows of bottles. The farther back you went the smaller and dimmer they became. And

the harsher the merchant would watch you. If you ever went to the very back, where the bottles were smaller than a man's fist, I swear he would practically be on top of you. These were the dangerous ones, the ideas that could steal your soul away from you.

Attached to each of the larger bottles were signs proclaiming their prices. From the largest ones out front you could buy dozens for a week's wages. Hundreds, if you had a good job. These back ones, the "let me see your pockets" ones, these were like paintings in a gallery, or fine wines in a cellar. They had no signs. If you had to ask the price, you couldn't afford them.

I once saw the magician buy one of the rare ones. I'm not sure how he got the money, maybe he traded something for it, I don't know. I watched from the front as the merchant reached up to the ceiling and grabbed a carboy the size of a jam jar. He used tongs to carefully reach in and pick out an idea, handling it like a glowing coal. He quickly wrapped it in paper and handed it to the magician, who ran off afterward.

I don't know what the idea was, but I didn't see the magician anymore after that.

The day after, I decided to follow the merchant and try to find out where exactly they were capturing or growing these ideas. In the evening, as the shops were closing down, I hid and watched as the man (this time small and portly) closed shop, moved all the wares he could into a small cart. He hitched it to a small brown pony and began to move off into the crowd. Trailing the man as discreetly as I could, I followed him through the streets, down to the harbor, and to a warehouse. I was too far behind to sneak in or grab a good look before he closed and locked the door, but when I tried to spy in the windows (unsuccessfully, they were plastered with paper) I could hear a great many people, a kind of dark susurrus of activity.

At the time I didn't think the portly man had noticed me, but when I went back to the warehouse the next day, it was empty and unlocked. Discarded items lay on the floors, evidence of the idea seller's quick disappearance. The rush I felt the day before was replaced by disappointment, and a tinge of fear.

The merchants still showed themselves at the market every day, but I never again got the chance to follow one all the way. They always somehow managed to lose me in the crowd. Eventually I stopped trying, satisfying myself with my penny-candy ideas.

I remember what it was like to eat an idea. You could do it in so many different ways. You could crunch them; feel them pop in your mouth. And suddenly your head was too small. You'd feel small fingers reaching up into you. And it was wonderful. In a flash, you'd know everything.

Or, you could eat them bit by bit. Pluck off a wing, put it in your mouth, and feel an inkling of the bigger picture. Bite off a leg and feel the thought beginning to congeal.

Or, and this was always my favorite way, you could put it in your mouth all at once, but not bite. Hold it there between your tongue and cheek, feel it dissolve like a fine hard candy. Make it last as long as possible. Roll it between your tongue and the roof of your mouth. Close your eyes and see a masterpiece painted one brushstroke at a time.

They were mostly fleeting little things: suggestions, or snatches of poetry, or art. Maybe a brief vision, like something out of a dream.

One time, about a year after my attempt to follow the merchant, I decided to try to keep an idea alive as long as possible on my own. Maybe learn something about them. I found a jar for myself and carefully moved the idea I bought from the wrapping into its new glass cage.

I kept it on my windowsill.

At night I could see it glow dimly in the jar, occasionally walking across the bottom of the jar or clumsily trying to fly around. I was afraid that if it moved too vigorously it could knock the glass to the floor and escape, but it never did.

The next day, I found it again at the bottom of the jar, moving slowly, sluggishly, like an arthritic man. It did not look well, barely glowing. I wondered what, if anything, the merchants fed it, whether I was killing it. I put a damp cloth in the jar, hoping that the water would revive it. I watched the idea until I went to bed.

On the third day, I was almost sure it was dead. It wasn't walking at all, and if it had any glow, it was indistinguishable from the strained morning light. I ate it quickly but gingerly, not sure if I would get anything. I crunched it all at once, afraid that if I really took my time any last bits of it would wander off into my subconscious, unnoticed.

The vision I had was barely real, stripped of all saturation, left with just the barest hints of color. I could see a hot, dry forest, the skinny trees spaced many feet apart. There were monkeys in the branches and tawny ghost-like lions paced through the underbrush. Wherever this place was, the name escaped me, pausing on the threshold, just beyond reach. I felt sure that my failed experiment was to blame for the lack of clarity. But even without the name or color, longing still welled up in me. A deep desire to watch those lions for myself, to tell people what I had seen.

And suddenly I wished that I was still a sailor, free from this dol-drum-like place, where, try as I might, I never went anywhere.

Then, one day, everything truly went to hell. I had been in Halifax

for five years, I was twenty-five, and I feared I'd never be able to change my life. I mean, *things* had changed, they always do. I had changed shifts, changed positions, changed lovers, apartments, many other things, but I was still basically living the same life as I had been when I stepped off the boat.

Halifax had been one of the largest ports in the war effort. Ships from all over the Americas and North Atlantic would stop for repairs or supplies. The products of our factories would be loaded up in huge wooden crates, sent for the front in Europe. I remember watching the workers load these crates, thinking about the purpose of our bullets and engines.

I was late for work that day. I had gotten caught up looking at the market's sights, stayed much longer than I meant to. I only realized my mistake as the clock struck nine, the air reverberating with leaden circles of sound. It was Thursday, December 6th, 1917.

I had just disentangled myself from the market throng when I heard the explosion. Less than a second later the shockwave hit.

At 8:40 that morning, the SS *Mont-Blanc* crashed into the Norwegian *Imo*. The *Mont-Blanc* was full of munitions, bound for Europe. Probably munitions I had helped create. Ten minutes after the impact, something on the boats caught on fire. Fifteen minutes after *that* the fire spread to the explosives. Two thousand people died that day, nine thousand more were injured. At the time, the Halifax Explosion was one of the most destructive events to have ever happened in the entire world, and would not be matched for another twenty-five years.

I woke up underneath the remains of a bakery stall. It took me a minute of struggling before I could crawl out and look around. The buildings around the market, those made of mortar and brick, were still standing.

But the tiny wooden shops that had made up my wonderful market were gone, completely wiped away by the blast. I remember being aware of a great many small fires around me. I could hear shouting far away.

But the one thing that caught my attention above anything else was the idea in front of me. It was small and it didn't move. The explosion had knocked down the idea merchant's stall along with all the others. Every single bottle had been smashed, the ideas were scattered to the winds. This particular one hadn't fared well, it might have been dead. I wasn't sure, barely conscious myself. I thought of my own poor captive from a couple months before.

I don't remember eating the grounded idea, but I remember what I thought as I crunched it down.

Whatever just happened, someone needs to tell people.

I don't remember getting up, or where I got the paper, or the pen, or how long I was at it. I dimly remember running towards the harbor. Explosions do funny things to a mind.

That was the beginning. When I started writing. Everything else, the newspaper, the reporting, the books, that all came afterward. All that traveling, all those stories.

It turns out that the lions were from India.

And above me the rest of the ideas, those that had managed to survive and escape, rose over the city like a cloud. Dispersing over the destruction, a glowing mass of inspiration, coiling off and out into the smoke.

PROSE SELECTION REVIEW

James Gaines's *THE IDEA SELLERS* is grounded in realism, in local color, in the feel of an unfamiliar time and place. We begin a century ago in Nova Scotia. We see and smell and hear a bustling old-time market with grocers and watchmakers and fishermen with full nets. And I think: I know this story. I recognize places like this one and stories that begin here.

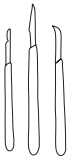
And then, suddenly, we're someplace else altogether, someplace magic and unfamiliar. Someplace with ideas living in bottles. Not metaphorical ideas in bottles. Actual ideas in bottles. I think: oh please oh please let him describe the ideas. And he does. They glow. They hide. They're warm and alive. They remind us of candy. They remind us of bugs. They're wrapped in paper like fresh doughnuts. They look like the souls of children, the narrator tells us. And then adds that you eat them.

But it's not totally unfamiliar. Like any idea, these fly; they live and die; they offer visions; they make their way inside you; you hope they will bring revelation and life-change, but mostly they are passing, fleeting, amusing, and then gone. You want to share them, but you can't quite. You want to follow them, but they're not nearly that detailed — they do not tell you how or where; they only coyly hint at what.

Gaines provocatively walks the line here between real and magic. We think this cannot be — ideas with wings flitting around in jars, a shop that sells the easy ideas for pennies while the bigger and harder and more dangerous ones are behind the counter and out of reach of all but those with the deepest pockets. But we also have trouble putting our finger on exactly what we don't believe here. Are ideas not commodified in our world too? Does our world not contain back alleys and strange markets and shady merchants selling mysteries we ingest, inhale, absorb to open and expand our minds? The television, the internet are many things, but also they are ideas encased in glass.

I love the metaphor of this story, and I love its reality. I love the world it paints for me, and I love its reflection of mine. I love the meta-narrative — that we find after all the narrator is telling us the story of the writing, of a life in writing, of life in writing. Eat an idea, write it down, change the world. Ideas lead to travel, perspective, the drive to see and do and be more, but mostly, they insist on being told, shared, written down. This should not surprise us — of course great writing starts with an idea, of course great writers eat ideas for breakfast — but somehow here we greet the news with revelation though its seeds have been there all along. This life, this story, starts not with the explosion but with the idea, not with the bang but with a whimper.

LAURIE FRANKEL teaches writing, literature, and gender studies here at the University of Puget Sound. Her first novel, *The Atlas of Love*, will be published in August 2010.





ENCIRCLE

steel and wood
20" x 6"

EMILY JOHNSTON 41 |

LANDSCAPE OF A SOVIET SOLDIER

ANDREI KOZLOV

Nikolai Vasil'evich quit the Moscow train yard
to paint birch trees in winter.

Before he could find decent brushes,
Joseph Stalin put him in a T-60

to mow through creeks, underbrush and Nazis,
until his left tread sunk into a bog

and stuck like an oversized loafer.

After the war, to avoid starvation,
he sketched portraits of Allies in West Berlin.

The soldiers' jaws curved like frozen streams.
Their eyes were soft like weak sun on pale branches.



STAMPEDING THROUGH THE PAST

Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

GARNER ANDREWS 43 |

A BAPTISM

LAUREN FRIES

With one hand on the small
of the mother's back, one soft
on the head of the child,
Father Murphy's voice stops
on the corner of a surprise:
this baby has only one eye.

He quails under the unruly eye,
stutters, made hot by the gaze. Small
is his voice when he speaks, surprised.
That single blue eye — piercing not soft —
glares fierce enough to stop
a man from his breath. "We bless this child

divine," he says, "this wholly innocent child,
in the name of the Trinity and the Lord's All-Seeing Eye."
Murphy gulps, cringes, tries not to stop.
"May the boy's victories be great and his sufferings small,
his path unstopped with rocks and gates, soft
beneath his feet." It had been a surprise

to the congregation – an awful surprise
when on that Sunday only mother and child,
no father to speak of, walked timid with soft
steps into the sanctuary, she counting every eye
upon them. Murphy encouraged her to wait, no small
task, for the father, perhaps, to return? But *Stop*,

she hissed. *This is important to me*. And stop
he did, obeying, to his own surprise.
No matter the white lace smock, too small
and too short, did not befit the child...
The priest shakes himself present, looks into the eyes
of the crowd, finishes the prayer – reluctantly, softly.

His stomach turns over, wrenches, softens,
as hand dips in the font, anoints the boy, and stops.
Which is worse, Murphy wondered, after, to miss an eye
or a parent? On every left side, another surprise –
but life too immediate: no time for a child
to grow into a man, no chance to be small.

The blue of that eye, electric and lonely in the face of the child,
burned a small hole in the back of his brain. He dreamed, surprised,
of his own baptism, not soft, but by fire. It was too late to stop.

SKYLIGHT

MEGAN HUGEL

Mom said Isabella was special and that's why she came out all mixed up with her face stretched and her fingers curled around an invisible pen etching words she would never understand. Sometimes when I can't sleep, I slip out of bed and go to the side of the room that would have been hers. I lie on the floor where her bed would be and try to imagine what it would be like to share a room with my sister. I think we'd share secrets at night and sometimes she'd forget to turn off the light.

* * *

Mom has new friends, Barry and Susie, but they tell us to call them Sun and Moon and they smell funny. Mom says I have to be nice to them because they are nice to me and give me treats that taste like straw and smell like old dirt. I don't like them, but Mom says my opinion doesn't matter because they're going to "help our family." We spend Sunday afternoon with them in their large brown house with white carpets and bright yellow walls. They keep more plants inside than outside and they have windows on their ceilings. I want to tell them that looking at the sky doesn't mean it's inside. You can't touch it, I want to say, you can't feel it, but they only speak in whispers and my voice sounds hoarse and unfamiliar in a house filled with vines.

Mom takes my brother Ryan and me on Sunday and her friends tell us to hang out in the Kid's Room while they have Adult Time. We peer into a bright orange room filled with plants and bookcases. "This isn't

a kid's room," I whisper to Ryan, "there aren't even any toys!" When I tell Mom they don't even have toys, she tells me there's some paper and a pen in her purse and I can color. When we used to bring Isabella places Mom had a separate bag of toys for her: picture books, crayons and plastic animals to keep her entertained when she forgot there were chicken strips on her plate. Isabella was always forgetting things like staying awake in movies and saying please and thank you. Mom said it was okay though because she was special so people understood. Mom also says they're going to help our family, but when she comes out of the Adult Room I can tell she's been crying. When you help someone you don't make them cry.

* * *

People say funerals are black, but Isabella's funeral was purple. The ribbon in Lucy's hair was purple, the nose on the teddybear Grandma brought me was purple, the punch Ryan spilled on his clean white shirt was purple, and the blood that came out of my knee when I tripped down the church steps dried purple at the hem of my new black dress. After the priest talked and everyone cried we stood in a line and people came up to us and told us they were "so sorry for our loss." All of Mom and Dad's friends patted us on the head and kissed our cheeks and they shook Dad's hand and hugged Mom.

"Ryan, I don't wanna do this anymore," I said to my brother, wiping old lady slobber from our Great Aunts off my cheek.

"Just suck it up," he whispered.

"Isabella would have slept through this," I muttered and Ryan kicked me in the shin. It left a purple bruise.

* * *

It was an accident. The cars outside startled me. I just turned around to see them. I didn't know Isabella's hands were still on me. I didn't know she'd tumble off the counter. We had been baking cookies and she wanted to stir the dough so I let her sit on the counter. I didn't think she could die. When she heard the crash Mom ran in and only saw me. She just stared at me. I don't think she'd seen Isabella yet. Mom screamed when she found out Isabella's brain wasn't strong enough to survive the fall. She screamed louder than the sirens that carried Isabella away.

After we put her in the ground Mom didn't look at me anymore.

* * *

On the Sunday after her funeral, Grandma took Ryan and me to Church while Mom and Dad had "alone time." I didn't want to go and I told Grandma this, but she said that I needed God now more than ever.

"Mom doesn't believe in God anymore," I told her and Grandma closed her eyes partway and sighed as she looked at me.

"Now what would make you say that?"

"That's what she said to Dad. I was supposed to be asleep, but I heard them talking. She said if there really was a God, he wouldn't have let Isabella come out special. She said if there really was a God, she wouldn't have to look at my face everyday as a reminder."

"And what did your dad say?"

"He said she was right."

* * *

Mom and Dad were happy before Isabella came out. When she was still in Mom's tummy and Dad still lived here, we were all happy. We went out for pizza on Thursdays at Leo's where the waitresses knew us and always had crayons and paper ready. If there wasn't too much pizza sauce spilled on my paper at the end of the night Mom would fold it into a square and the next morning I'd wake up to see it on the refrigerator. When Isabella came out we stopped going to Leo's even though Ryan and I begged Mom to go. "I'm tired," she'd say and Dad started working later at the office. My pictures lived in a pile on the kitchen counter even though they didn't have any pizza sauce on them.

Before Isabella came out Mom and Dad slept in the same bed. Dad always smiled when he said it drove him crazy that she always fell asleep with the television on and Mom laughed when she said Dad's snores sounded like a freight train. Before Isabella came out they'd let me sleep with them if the monsters found me, but after she came out and Dad slept on the couch and they always "needed their sleep" and not me.

After Isabella died Dad slept in a bed at a different house and Mom left the TV on for days.

* * *

She wasn't perfect like people think. Lucy was supposed to sleepover and we were going to watch movies and eat ice cream sundaes for dessert. I wrote it on the calendar in the kitchen in pink so no one would forget, but then Isabella got sick and Mom told me, "it will just have to be rescheduled" in her tired voice.

"But Mom, you promised!" I protested and when she shook her head firmly I yelled, "Dad will let me!"

But Dad worked late at the office and Isabella's cough won. Lucy said she'd come over some other time and no one checked on me when I slammed my bedroom door.

* * *

Her name was Dr. Michelle, but her office didn't look like a doctor's office. She didn't take my temperature or ask if I eat all my vegetables. She asked me how I felt when I thought about Isabella.

"Nothing, I don't feel anything," I told her while my mind rushed back to one sunny Friday when I came home from a bad day at school and Mom was in the kitchen feeding Isabella in her high chair. There was more food on her bib than in her mouth and Mom was exhausted, streaks of sweet potatoes in her graying hair. Isabella's eyes reminded me of marbles tumbling around the room. Sometimes they'd roll right past me even when I waved or made a silly face, but this day they rested at my feet. I picked up the spoon and to the amazement of both Mom and me, she let the potatoes slide into her mouth and down her throat. Mom slumped back in her chair as I fed Isabella telling her about school that day and she let her eyes rest on me, her big sister.

"Do you feel guilty? It wasn't your fault," Dr. Michelle told me, "accidents happen all the time."

Her voice reminded me of the time Lucy's uncle told us that tiger sharks are different than other animals. When they're still inside their mom's belly there are lots of them, but one is stronger and hungrier than the others and eats the rest of them. Lucy's uncle said that's why only one is born, because it ate all the others. Maybe I'm really a tiger shark but I forgot to eat Isabella and that's why she came out a couple years

later all messed up. Maybe that's why I killed her in the kitchen, because I didn't in Mom's belly. I decided to tell Dr. Michelle this, but when I looked up my mom was back in the room and I realized all the time had run away.

* * *

When we used to go on vacation to visit Grandma we would have packing contests. Whoever got their suitcase packed with everything folded neatly the fastest, won. I always won. Mom said I was the best packer she'd ever known.

This time there is no contest because I am the only one packing. I pack my favorite green pajamas and my teddybear. I put my toothbrush on top next to clean socks. When I'm done I grab my sleeping bag and carry my pink Barbie suitcase down the stairs so the noise wouldn't wake Mom and Ryan. I don't know where I'm going. I decide the park sounds nice with the covered picnic area. It's three blocks left and five blocks right and across the street with the big statues. I think maybe I should have left a note, but they won't even notice I'm gone. I set up my sleeping bag under one of the picnic tables and hold my teddy really tight.

When I open my eyes Mom is standing over me covered in tears and a policeman with a flashlight stands behind her, the light hurting my eyes. "Jesse what were you thinking?" she yells, but before I have a chance to answer her arms are around me and I smell her lavender soap and worry.

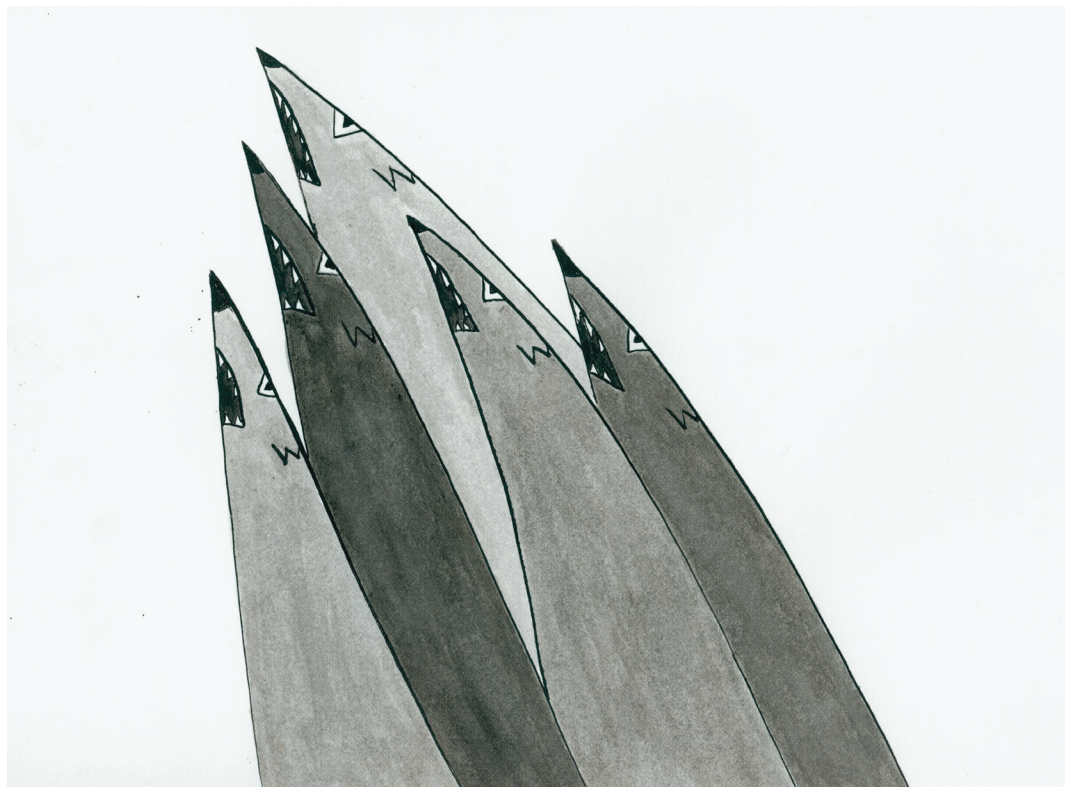
"Oh Jesse," she mumbles into my hair. Moving her hands so they cup my face she demands to know why I ran away and what I was thinking.

I want to tell her that she forgot my parent teacher conference. I

want to tell her that she's forgotten everything since Isabella's been gone. I want to tell her that I'm sorry, that I miss her. I want to tell her that I want Dad to move back in and that I miss Thursday pizza nights at Leo's. I want to tell her everything, but what comes out is, "I loved her too, Mom."

Mom stares at me, her eyes softened and her tears still. She outlines my face with her hands and looks me up and down like she's forgotten who I am. "Oh honey," she says, and then she holds me rocking back and forth while the policeman's walky-talky spits out static and street names.

Instead of going home, Mom drives me to the diner down the street and orders us ice cream cones. Her eyes look heavy and her breath is slow, but she sits across the booth from me while I tell her about tiger sharks and eat my ice cream.



WINTER WOLVES

pen and india ink

HALLIE BATEMAN 53 |

HIGH ON THE RIDGE WITH MADELINE AND SNOOP DOGG

ADAM COLTON

Weather beaten gravel crunches underneath
the tires of my little white Rav-4 as we pass
Ford F-350s and fat guys on four wheelers
on our way up Red-Grade road. Steep inclines and hanging
switchbacks keep the car in low gear. On the ascent, Madeline and I
suck on Camel Wides and blast Gin 'n Juice by Snoop.
We watch the road plateau on a ridge of
The Big Horn Mountains. Snow-caps guard
the horizon. Bear Paw Peak pierces blue sky
above the other summits. We find our rock
outcropping after five more miles of careful driving
along the ridge, maneuvering around falling rock drops
on both sides. Sitting at 6000 feet, rolling joints,
and staring at the tree lines encircling mountains
more than thirty miles away, we wonder whether
we can see a million trees.



MAPPING ASPEN

screenprint

26" x 30"

EDEN FERRY 55 |

I SAY SHE
WAS A IAN GREENFIELD
SERAPH

A box of verdigris tears gathers dust
in a rented room's pane-fractured light.
I harvested them one white autumn morning
from a stained copper angel in a graveyard.

The leaves were tainted jack-o'-lanterns
and the wind shivered their yellowbrown drifts
 like mummies laughing.
The tears cracked off her face into my hands,
stalactites of rain and grime garnishing the shelter
her outstretched wings offered amid the gales,
but that day,
the season long since turned,
there were no storms.

The angel no longer sits on that granite plinth.
They say she flew heavenward, they say she was stolen.
If that incandescent body, clad in the richest shades of fall
before the world darkened it to a sooty human color,
were indeed purloined, sold, finger by pure-hearted breast,
perhaps
—I like to think—
my lightswitches are made of angel flesh,
and the smoother circuits of my computer touch the empyrean.
Somewhere an electric chair may carry out its office by divine contact
while the badges of the wardens flash the tetragrammaton
to the uncomprehending sullen eyes of the damned.

But I would trade every sacred machine
for a letter,
saying somewhere she flies in the rain,
shining red and gold,
the slag of a Midwest city's air and decline washed away
and those sheltering wings bowering the homeless in the woods.
The tears I snapped away from her face one October
left in their absences russet slashes
like sunrises on her cheeks,
and I like to think the dazzle they left behind spread
a wildfire blushing across her metal Madonna's face,
and loosed her from the chains we dead have wound over her feet.
I dream, sometimes, of receiving her epistle in a copper box,
like the one on my desk holding in velvet her tears,
so I can cast them out,
because they weigh on the world like fall.

ALICE AND THE LOOKING GLASS

JAMIE FLETCHER

When at last she forgot how to beat her heart,
They could finally clean up.

Gone in the purge, the wrinkled dresses,
Racks and racks,
and every tiny figurine
she hid in cabinets, old books
with memories tied 'round their broken spines
like yellow sewing ribbon.

Even in a house as empty as her stare,
They forgot the mirror, dusty and derelict,
like she forgot my name
(in plain sight, but overlooked).
They left it hanging, abandoned, in the hall
to keep the ghost-etching memory of her face.

After it was over, I stood where she had
and knew myself first

by how much I looked like her.



EVERY MORNING *linocut*

MORGANA HARDY 59 |



REDBUGGY

| 60 DAVID PENDLETON

MOON WALKING

NOAH BROD

The water closed up Verna's sides and over his head. He fell to the bottom where his ears popped under the pressure and the weight of the freezing water above spread across every ligament and joint in his body: squeezing and wicking off the heat. Verna dug his toes into the sand and leapt towards the surface. His buoyancy carried him up in a bounding leap before the weight of the rock drew him back down to the sandy ocean floor. He repeated the bounding jump two more times before dropping the rock and racing back to break the surface. "Damnit, I nearly broke my record! I almost did it!" he said between gasps of briny air. "Did you see how long I stayed under?" Verna's mother had once said the game would be as close as he ever came to becoming an astronaut and from then on Verna called the game moon walking. He and his friends whittled away the summer scavenging the beach at low tide for rocks to dive with. The other boys were bored and easily swayed by any suggestion of adventure; they were as happy overturning rocks to find crabs as they were hoisting them. For Verna, though, moon walking was an obsession. During low tide at the beach he took a ladder and together the boys and he hoisted the best sized stones up on top of a large table-topped boulder called House Rock. Then they left and returned in the afternoon at high tide when the only relief from the heat was the water. Verna and his friends made the struggled swim across the three hundred yards between the beach and the rock almost every day as his grandmother would watch them from afar, sunning on the shore and doing her crossword. As the boys swam to House Rock today, Verna took some time to

turn around and taunt the others who were gasping from the cold and far behind. He surged ahead and clambered onto the rock and used the barnacles along the side as footholds to get up. So long as he was careful not to slip they didn't cut him. Usually Verna warmed himself on the rock while patiently waiting for the others to get there too, but tomorrow he would be on a highway somewhere far from the coast. Usually he was the first to make the jump anyway since it was his game, so Verna hoisted one of the rocks from the stored pile and carefully walked to the edge of House Rock's barnacled roof. "You'll never catch me!" he yelled with a grin at the two boys who were still splashing towards the rock, and with that Verna took a deep breath and leapt. A feeling of contentment washed through Verna. The disconnect with the world above the water was soothing, and adrenaline pleasantly coursed through his body. The sun dimmed into a blue-green trickle that played across drifting seaweed and his friends' raucous laughter, a mere fifteen feet above, dulled into nothing. His sight was bleary. His sense of touch became numb with cold. Even Verna's thoughts seemed to jangle a little less violently under the heavy cool compress of the sea. Once, Verna had tried to make a snorkel with a long pipe so he could sit in the shade of House Rock all day, and the waves had spilled over the top of it and had nearly drowned him. But as he sunk sliding to the bottom today, with his arms grasped tightly around the rock he had barely been able lift above, Verna didn't think about the time he nearly drowned or about his friends above or about being an astronaut or how his grandmother would correct his pronunciation of "acrost" whenever he read off clues to her. Verna crouched as his feet sunk into the sand. He let the rock lean against his chest and he sat on his heels. Verna monitored his breathing and didn't move at all, he hoped that by freezing like a sunken figurehead he would be able to draw out time forever amidst the seaweed. He settled into the sand as the years passed and barnacles and eels crept across him until a treasure hunter snorkeling found him and sold him to the American Museum of Natural History. There he would have a glass case adorned with a little

white placard placed between pirate gold and cannon shot. It would read: "Pirate figurehead circa 1993 – depicting Verna Drip, a mythological creature who drew the souls of drowned men to the bottom of the ocean. Verna tested their passions by making them swim up from the bottom. Those unable to reach the surface became barnacles along his side." The rock sitting in Verna's lap didn't feel like it was cutting into his hands and thighs anymore. God it was cold! His lungs were burning now, but Verna pushed the nagging away and patiently re-concentrated on the seeping feeling all over his body. His senses had fallen away and his thoughts were diluted. Everything had drifted out to sea that wasn't anchored to the rock, and only the pressure against his chest now remained which reasonably and patiently questioned his resolve. He thought to argue but the parts with which he could were numb and frozen; now all he could think of was a nagging question. Louder and more insistent than before, the question now felt like it was being chiseled into the rock against his chest. "What are you doing Verna Drip?" It etched into the stone in his mother's handwriting. What an odd question. Wasn't it obvious?

Perhaps not. In one reluctant sigh of a motion Verna rolled the rock off himself and pressed off of the sandy bottom. As he rose up into the warmer layers of water brightly lit by the afternoon sun Verna felt suddenly awake. The warm water jolted him and he flew into a state of panic. Verna clutched and spasmed toward the light. Just below the surface he gasped and hit the surface spluttering. Unable to keep himself above, Verna sunk below again until his flailing caught the corner of the housetop's roof and he scrabbled up in a panic. He dragged himself up across the barnacles oblivious to the slices they scored along the side of his body. As Verna lay there scratched and bleeding in the sun, his lungs shuddering, he ignored his friends' excited tones and let the ache wash in over the warmth of the rock at this back. He soaked himself in the late-afternoon sun, and as Verna began to feel the salt stinging into the cuts on his body he let out a laugh.

KAFKA'S WAFFLE HOUSE

ELI RITCHIE

On a bench recommended by Rick Steves,
On the lower level of a ferry,
I read the fatherly traveler's blurbs past Tokapi Palace,
Around the Golden Horn of European Istanbul
And straight down the Bosphorous.

Some Turkish men sold yogurt and plastic cups of orange juice
To tall German couples with the scarves of Munich winters.
Their path weaved between legs
Propped up on chairs, and the cracked, white rim hanging over the ripples.

Others practice their English.
They brag about sex in colloquial American television phrases,
ask about university blondes,
offer to drink Efes¹ and move backgammon stones;
off the docks, in the bustling air of the Egyptian spice bazaar.

At the final stop is a small fishing village,
Three steps into Asia. Just past
The malevolent grinding rocks of Jason's passing Argonauts,
Resting at the chin of the Black Sea's opening mouth.

¹ A Turkish Pilsner beer

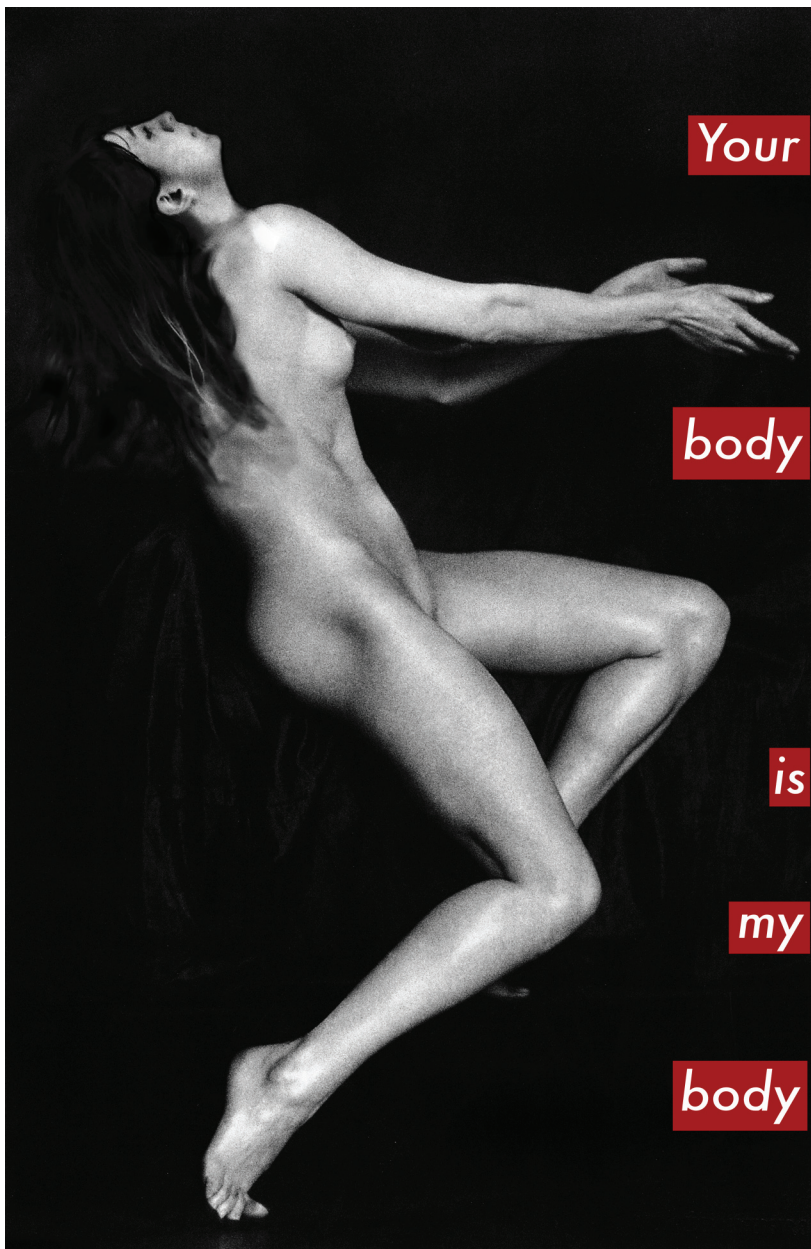
Along the shore houses press together
Like Islington, or some London town.
But there are no chips with my fish,
Which is whole, salted, and between bread.

Somehow Rick doesn't jot down
How surreal day-trip Asia can be,
Like hearing a skipped stone hit the opposite shore,
Across the way is a restaurant named
"Kafka's Waffle House,"

And over my sandwich,
My eyes wax with literature

Herrs and Fraus at the front.
Man-sized cockroaches escaping the pressures of family and home
To sit up off their backs and pour syrup, without having to dodge flying apples.
Depressed men, coughing with tuberculosis, could drink their un-pasteurized milk,
And refuse to eat the sausages.
The servers would never tell you their names, or the specials,
You see, everything belongs to the cooks.
Or, good Franz, if he happens to be in the back.
Show me what you are writing, friend.

Somehow I stay as silent as the lined wisdom of my guide
wanders off onto trails and over ruining stones,
Flag poles, bus stops, notebooks,
The view out the other side of the boat.



"YOUR BODY IS MY BODY" WITH BARBARA KRUGER
AND TRUDE FLEISCHMANN

LEAH VENDL

GOD

KELSEY WILBURN

You were supernatural bones
against my muscle –
I woke up with bruises
around my ankles
where I'd been wrapped
about you like snake skin.

You said God lived in my heels,
spent hours peeling
them apart,
disappointed in the marrow
and grey finches
in my feet –
you'd been looking
for something greater
than summer trills
and humanity.

You drew me in the margins
of your universe
when my insides depressed you,
pushed me to the midnight hours
where I looked like an apparition
and finally suited
your spiritual hands.

CCR